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LORENZ
ALMA
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HIS LIFE AND WORKS

BY

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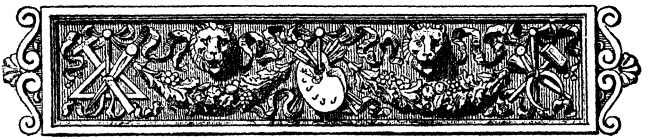


LORENZ ALMA TADEMA.

THE charm of the author's twofold vocation of scientist and poet lies in his being at liberty to devote himself exclusively to congenial occupations; and what could be pleasanter than to trace the life and labor of a man who is very near one's heart, whose works afford nothing but satisfaction and enjoyment, and of whose method of production and sphere of activity he may venture to say — the author as an artist modestly retires behind Tadema — often and strikingly coincide with his own.

Yet it has required much urging from the publisher of these pages to induce me to write a biography of my friend. He is an artist and, as the writer is only a lover

of art, not a professional art-critic, he could not at first refrain from declining a task for which his capacity and critical training in a field at present occupied by science did not seem equal. But the deeper his sympathy with the man whose life and creations were to be delineated, the more tempting the commission appeared and, after reflecting upon the manner of executing it and entering into the master's development and works, he thought that he who knew him so well as a man also understood him as an artist, and would probably be able to give a faithful picture of his life. True, this must from the outset decline to be judged as an art-criticism, and its author will be content and grateful if his portrayal is successful in presenting to other lovers of art an accurate picture, in clear and lifelike form, of one of the greatest and most peculiar artists of our times.

Another and more professional hand, Vosmaer, the Dutch author and art-critic, has undertaken in his art-romance, "The Amazon"*— a work far too little known in Germany — to give us a portrait of Tadema,

* English Translation published by Wm. S. Gottsberger, N. Y.

whose personality as man and artist he attempted to copy line by line in the artist Aisma; but the poet has profited by the license allowed him to add much of his own material to the picture, and, moreover, occupied himself more with the finished master than with the process of his development. In the latter field, Vosmaer has diverged most widely from the true course of events; but it seems particularly attractive to me to follow the master's work, not as a poet, but a historian, and show the finished artist to the readers of these pages, not in the light of imagination, but precisely as he is in reality.

The Tādema family (not Tadéma) is, as the name — which sounds like Habbema, Wibisma, Eisinga, etc — indicates, an old Frieseland one. Our Tadema's father was a notary in the beautiful and wealthy village of Dronrijp in Leeuwarden, his mother's name was Brouwer. At his baptism the boy — born January 8th, 1836 — who was to be so great an honor to his native place, was christened Lorenz. Alma is a fancy name, adopted by himself when a young artist, partly on account of its euphonious sound, partly because he

was vexed — owing to the fact that the initial letter T of his name was so far down in the alphabet — that his pictures were always entered on one of the last pages of the catalogues of the exhibitions.

Every one knows how level and destitute of any elevation are most of the provinces of Holland; but this cannot be asserted of the soil of our friend's home, which is rich in undulating, rounded hills. Carefully tilled grain-fields lie between luxuriant meadows, on which graze motley herds of cattle; light and shadow alternate harmoniously in these fruitful fields, so rich in every hue, and the houses of Dronrijp are picturesquely grouped around the lofty site of the church. At sunset the lush grass glitters, the ripe grain shimmers like sparkling gold, and in the background of this picture the church towers above the gently-rising fertile hills and the neat houses of the peasantry, as if an artist had chosen its location.

Here Tadema received the first impressions of childhood, here perhaps the bright colors and brilliant light, afterwards so exquisitely portrayed by his art, were stamped upon his soul. In this region, too, the

only antiquities found in Holland (coins and ornaments of the Merovingian period) were discovered, and seeming trifles often give the artist's soul the impulse to the grandest achievements. Was he, afterwards the artist of the Merovingian dynasty, directed towards that great and bloody epoch of French history by some of these things, a word heard, or picture seen when a child?

His father died young, but his noble mother understood how to train the vivacious boy with tenderness and discretion. Like many sons whose education is directed by a widowed mother, his mind and imagination developed with special harmony and vigor.

His father had desired that his son, like himself, should enter the legal profession, and he was therefore sent to the gymnasium of Leeuwarden, where the family had removed, and which is only a few leagues from Dronrijp. Here, too, there was no lack of encouragement to artistic taste and the enjoyment of antiquities; for in the pretty capital of Frieseland the stately, beautiful, venerable town-hall recalls the flowering of art in past centuries, and a museum of Frieseland

antiquities directs attention to the former period of the bold and noble Frieseland race, whose law claims: "The Frieselanders must be free so long as the winds blow from the clouds and the world stands." They have remained "a nation of free men," and have also outwardly retained their ancient customs and costumes longer and more firmly than any other race of Lower Saxony. At the present day Leeuwarden is still renowned for the beauty of its women, and in Tadema's boyhood many of them yet wore the superb, picturesque costume of their "nation." How splendid is the broad gold frontlet ending at the temples in rosettes or oval gold plates, in which diamonds often glitter; what a stately appearance the cap and veil of costly lace gave and still lends the more conservative women; how admirably the ear-rings, flashing with gems of great value, which descended as a family heirloom from mother to daughter, suited a beautiful face. This brilliant costume, so striking a contrast to our plain garb, which rigidly excludes everything unique and magnificent, could not fail to please the young artist and incite him to seek the ages when everybody wore gold ornaments

and gay garments. And Tadema's boyish eyes had acquired betimes the artistic intuition, his talent had shown itself in early childhood. It was first noticed—so he told me himself—when he was scarcely five years old. Merely for the sake of occupation, he had shared the drawing lessons given to his older brothers, and while the teacher was sketching for him a block used as a model, he had seized his hand and showed him that a certain line ought not to run as it did, but the opposite way. Soon his genius attracted attention by other little independent productions; but though his mother placed no obstacles in the way of the early choice of his profession, she insisted that he must first complete his course of study at the gymnasium, and the studious lad, who as soon as he understood the classics took pleasure in the ancient languages, willingly yielded. Here he obtained access to those sources from which he was to draw the best and most precious material for his later works; here, for the first time, he was brought in contact with the life of the Greeks and Romans, which, as a finished artist in Italy, he made peculiarly his own.

His eager mind, his remarkable linguistic talent, and the industry peculiar to him, carried him through his classes at school so rapidly, that in 1853 he could be sent to the academy in Antwerp. He left his sister's portrait, his first independent production, with his family, and diligently labored under De Keyser and Wappers in the Belgian art-capital to perfect himself as an artist.

He was a merry young fellow, universally popular, fond of all the pleasures of the gay artist-world to which he belonged, yet full of earnest devotion to study. The lively youth took the cares of life very lightly, but had a serious view of art, and it was long before he attained any degree of self-confidence. Great as were his talent and industry he could establish a very severe standard for himself, and at first none of his productions seemed to him worthy of being exhibited or offered for sale.

In the French-speaking portion of Belgium, among masters and companions, the majority of whom looked to France for their best inspirations, the German blood of his race strongly asserted itself. The coloring of

this artist was at first Dutch, the subject chosen for his first picture was German, and Tadema, though a native of Frieseland, who developed into a master in Belgium and France and finally settled in London as a naturalized Englishman, nevertheless aroused more sympathy in Germany than any other foreign artist and by means of his creations so identified himself with the lovers of art, that we to a certain extent number him among ourselves. This phenomenon is no accidental one, but may be explained by the German basis of his character, the German truthfulness, simplicity, and extreme thoroughness, which distinguish everything he creates. Nothing can better confirm this statement than the fact that "Faust and Gretchen" was the subject of the first large picture he painted in the Belgian art-school.* He finished this aquarelle in 1857 and presented it to the host of the *cercle artistique* to which he belonged. He treated his second work, whose subject was an incident in the history of his native land: "The Destruction of Ter-

* Engravings or photographs of all Alma Tadema's pictures may be obtained at L. H. Lefèvre's, London, King Street, St. James Square.

doest Abbey," with equal disrespect by giving it to his mother's cook to put somewhere in the dining-room.

So long as his creations did not correspond with the ideal that hovered before him, they seemed valueless; but he felt that this ideal was attainable and failure did not discourage, only stimulated him to improvement. Besides, success soon came and when, in 1859, his mother accepted his invitation and with his sister joined him in Antwerp, he threw himself into his work with redoubled zest under the eyes of this beloved, admirable woman, and found the right teacher in the person of one of the noblest and most lovable artists of our century. Tadema, if any artist, may be cited as an example that a talented young painter derives infinitely greater benefit from the instruction of a capable master, than from the course of lectures at the Academy — no matter what name it bears. How many of our leading sculptors and painters I have heard enthusiastically support this opinion!

The "Plundering of Egmond Abbey," completed in 1859, Tadema valued very little, like many others, and therefore threw it aside, but he now succeeded

in being received as a pupil by Van Leys, who at that time had deviated widely from the French romantic school he had joined in his youth, and regained the simplicity and directness natural to him. Leys had reached this turn in Germany, and thither he was often attracted during the years of Tadema's pupilage. Though this master's genius did not enable him to treat great historical subjects with powerful effect, he was nevertheless a thorough artist and a keen observer. The critic perceives in his "Walk outside of the City" and his "Mass," a more healthful realism, and a more successful and loving devotion to actual life than in any other paintings of that period; the portraits by him, too, which I have seen, are distinguished by great truthfulness and a realism which seems ready to sacrifice beauty to accuracy. Besides, his pictures cannot be denied a brilliancy of coloring he owed to his Parisian masters. He usually chose subjects from the life of the people and the history of his native land, and these are employed even for the frescoes in the great guildhall of Antwerp, which he did not live to complete.

In this artist Tadema found the right master. No one can deny that the works of Van Leys possess rare directness and Tadema, who has one of the most straightforward natures I ever met, brought him a high degree of this very quality. If the Belgian master's personality can be deduced from his works, he must have had an extremely amiable, truthful, and spite of all his simplicity, a vigorous and independent artist nature; if the tree may be judged by the fruit, he was also an admirable teacher, and Tadema himself says that Van Leys' instruction made an era in his whole development. Yet he was far from subjecting himself absolutely to his master's mannerism. From the beginning he remained faithful to himself, and with perfect justice could say in after years to the well-informed art-critic, Zimmern: "If I have obtained any degree of success, it is because I have always been faithful to my own ideas, followed the inspirations of my own brain, and imitated no other artist. Whoever wishes to accomplish anything in any career in life must first of all be faithful to his own nature, and this, I may assure you, I always have been."

While his skill rapidly increased under the eyes of his teacher, Leys, his attention was turned towards a period of European history which, though as a whole monstrous and detestable, is in detail extremely rich in artistic material.

Gregory of Tours' History of the Franks had fallen into his hands and made him familiar with the royal family of the Merovingian dynasty, at whose head stood men of powerful frame clad in golden armor, beautiful, yet terrible women, with floating hair or glittering diadems, attired in brilliant robes and flashing jewels. Merovingian antiquities had been found near his native village, it was not difficult for the well-educated young artist to read the simple Latin of the Bishop of Tours, and it has afforded me special pleasure to trace the manner in which he has used Gregory's narrative and how, even at that time, he strove, with the scientific sense and painstaking faithfulness of the scholar, to search out and profit by every trace that could be obtained of the costumes, weapons, household utensils, and ornaments of the Merovingian period.

The historical work just mentioned is really a treasure-house of art material, and when Vosmaer asking his light-hearted friend, to whom everything gloomy and monstrous seemed utterly alien, how he had happened to choose the Merovingians, received the gay answer: "They are a 'sorry lot,' to be sure, still they are picturesque and interesting." Tadema was perfectly right, and the work of their historian, to those imaginative persons who can conjure before their mental vision all the strange and horrible deeds perpetrated by these men and women, becomes as bewitching and absorbing as a thrilling and tragic epic poem. Though Gregory of Tours lacks the critical circumspection we demand from our modern historians, he is nevertheless a first-class narrator, whose vivid manner of recital gains a special charm from his speaking in behalf of his heroes and — in a way far too personal for a historian — taking sides with them as suits his own fancy, and showing the reward for virtue and punishment for crime during the earthly life of the individual.

Shortly before obtaining Van Leys for a master, Tadema had directed his attention to the time of the

Migration of the Nations. A pencil study made in the year 1859 for the water-color of Attila's death is in Vosmaer's possession, and the picture of "Chlotildis * at the Grave of her Grandchildren" belongs to the same period.

This picture distinctly shows how he used his source of inspiration. A thrilling scene took possession of his soul, and he expanded it, freed it from what he had read, and gave artistic expression to the conception which, in mentally recasting the fact, had most deeply impressed him. Gregory of Tours makes no mention of the queen mourning at the grave, but tells the following story: "The first great Chlodwig had by Chlotildis, the daughter of the Burgundian king, three sons: Chlodomer, Childebert, and Chlotar. The oldest was slain in a battle with the Burgundians, but his mother, Chlotildis, received his sons in Paris, where she reared them with special love and care. Her second son, Childebert, became jealous of his nephews and fearing that, through his mother's affec-

* Gregory of Tours writes the name differently; Chrodichildis and Chlothieldis.

tion, they might obtain the throne, he secretly sent messengers to his brother Chlotar, and summoned him to Paris, where they determined to murder the lads. To get possession of the children, they induced their mother to place them in their charge on the pretext of raising them to the throne. This plan pleased Chlotildis because her grandsons were the children of her oldest son. As soon as the boys were in their uncles' power, Chlotar seized the eldest by the arm, hurled him on the ground, thrust a knife into his shoulder and cruelly murdered him. At the loud shrieks of the dying prince, the other boy threw himself at Childebert's feet, clasped his knees and cried, amid his tears: 'Protect me, dear uncle, that I may not die like my brother!' Childebert, with tears streaming down his face, exclaimed: 'Give me this child's life, I beg you, my dear brother; I will guarantee what you desire, only don't kill him.' But the other, loading him with abuse, answered: 'Push him off or die in his stead! You planned this affair yourself,' he added, 'will you prove recreant so soon?' When Childebert heard this, he thrust the boy away and threw him into his

brother's hands. Chlotar grasped him, plunged the knife into his side and killed him as he had murdered the elder brother. Then they also killed the children's servants and tutors . . . . The queen placed the bodies of the two princes on the same bier and, amid chants and unutterable grief, followed them herself to St. Peter's Church and there buried them together. One was ten, the other seven years old."

Tadema selected no passage of this striking narrative for representation, but his artist eye looked beyond what Gregory related and beheld the image of the grandmother as she lingered, mourning, beside the grave of her darlings, for whom she had cherished hopes so grand and beautiful, thinking of them with grieving love.

On the other hand our friend often closely adhered to the event described by his historian; for instance, in his picture of "Fredegunde at the death-bed of Bishop Praetextatus," which was completed three years after he became Van Leys' pupil. All Tadema's great qualities appear in this superb painting: thorough comprehension of the subject to be treated, har-

monious composition, in which every figure has its just value, pervaded by what might be termed a classic repose that serves in the happiest manner as a foil to the passionate emotion of the principal character, the most loving choice and elaboration of detail, an underlying mood which powerfully moves the spectator's soul, and a fidelity in the representation of architecture and costume, that rejects everything the connoisseur might exclude as not belonging to the period of the event depicted.

Gregory of Tours gives the following account of the incident represented in the picture just mentioned: "At the instigation of Fredegunde, Praetextatus, Bishop of Rouen, was insidiously attacked on Easter Sunday, while commencing the alternating chants, and severely wounded under the shoulder by the assassin's sword. The prelate was instantly borne to his chamber by his attendants and laid upon his bed, and soon after Fredegunde appeared with the Dukes Beppolen and Ausovald. She feigned indignation at what had occurred and an ardent desire to discover the perpetrator and severely punish his crime. The bishop, who per-

FREDEGUNDE AT THE DEATH-BED OF BISHOP PRAETEXTATUS.

ceived her treachery, replied: 'Who did it? The same person who murdered our kings, who has so often shed innocent blood and has committed so many crimes in this realm.' Then Fredegunde said: 'I have very skilful physicians who will cure your wound. Permit them to visit you.' — 'It is God's will to summon me from this world now,' he answered; 'but you, from whom all these crimes emanated, will be accursed throughout eternity, and God will avenge my blood upon your head.' Then she went away, but the bishop set his affairs in order and expired."

Here the picture follows Gregory's narrative line by line. Praetextatus has raised himself to a sitting posture on the couch and, beneath the shoulder of the arm rigidly extended in malediction, is seen the wound, whose bandage has been loosed by the violent gesture. The victim's countenance is not the face of a gentle pastor; it seems as if Tadema had known that he — as criticism has since proved — had not been exiled without guilt. There is great energy in the countenance and hand of the prelate uttering the curse. The calmness of the queen, who sits beside

the deathbed, forms a singular, nay, startling contrast to this violent emotion. She is beautiful, very beautiful; we can understand that for her sake the rich but hapless Princess Galsvintha could be abandoned and murdered by her husband, Chilperich. The faint, sarcastic smile, with which she has offered the aid of her physicians to her victim, still hovers around her lovely lips. Habituated to murder and bloodshed, what to her is the bishop's wrath, since she is sure that she has removed him from her path? His: "It is God's will to summon me from this world now!" appears to ring pleasantly in her ears. The priest, who stands between her and the death-bed, holding the sacrament in his right hand and gazing in mute wrath at the guilty woman, is an exquisite figure. Nor are the two dukes, who accompany the queen, forgotten. The prelate's sleeping-room is low, yet not destitute of ornament. The bedstead, the heavy beams of the ceiling, the large pattern of the mosaic of the floor and the curtain of the couch, the pillars, and the heavy angular chair in which Fredegunde sits — everything, even the costume and armor of the dukes, is genuine. Such must have been

the appearance of a bishop's sleeping-room in the Merovingian era. There is nothing modern — neither in the accessories nor the personages. Everything occupies its right place, and the curse of the murdered man echoes shrilly and awfully amid the quiet of the death-chamber. The beautiful woman still smiles, but it seems as if her limbs were already growing rigid under the ban of the malediction.

In 1860, before the completion of this picture, the first fruit of Leys' instruction had already appeared in the magnificent painting destined to instantly raise Tadema to the ranks of the first artists of his time and make his name famous. The material to be transformed in his soul and on his canvas into the brilliant scene instinct with life, that is shown our readers in the adjoining copy, was derived from a brief admonition. Chlodwig's wife, Chlotildis, was the daughter of the third of the four sons of the Burgundian king, Gundevech. Prior to her marriage with the great Chlodwig, her uncle Gundobad, from base greed, had stabbed her father, Chilperich, and hurled her mother, with a stone around her neck, into the water to be drowned. After

having, as queen of France, shared her husband's grandeur and mourned for him — he died in his forty-fifth year — she, who, "in all decorum and constant benevolence," resided at Tours, said to her half-grown sons: "Do not let me repent, my dear sons, that I have lovingly reared you. Remember with wrath, I beg you, the outrage I have endured, and avenge wisely and boldly the deaths of my father and mother."

Tadema shows us the noble queen during the effort to steel the avenging arms, and the axe the boy is throwing for practice — perhaps the "Franziska," his father understood how to swing so powerfully — is not hurled merely against the target erected; no, the mark that stands before the prince's mental vision is doubtless the brow of the hated murderer, his uncle. His mother, with her youngest son clinging to her side, is watching him. He knows it and summons all his strength and dexterity to display his skill. His instructor, the armed warrior, who has bent low on one side to watch the cast, is an exquisite and strikingly lifelike figure. Before the queen, who is seated on a throne under the pillared roof of a corridor which sur-

TRAINING OF CHLOTILDIS' SONS.

rounds the court-yard, stands her second son, a delicate little lad; but he, too, holds an axe in his hand and is only waiting until his older brother has performed his task and it will be his turn to throw. Queen Chlotildis rejoices in her children's strength, yet her features express care and sorrow. She is thinking of past grief, and perhaps her boding heart tells her what anguish these children, she is training for avengers, will cause her in the future by their guilty shedding of blood. There is not a single figure among the courtiers which is not extremely individual and attractive.

The young master has clearly shown in this picture his Dutch training, but shuns the chiaro-oscuro and light-effects of a Rembrandt, and here, as in the majority of his later paintings, places the objects represented in clear, broad daylight. This treatment lends most of Tadema's pictures the brightness and clearness so strikingly peculiar to the non-connoisseur, and permits the artist to everywhere assert the value of his colors.

After the "Training of Chlotildis' Sons" had ex-

cited the greatest enthusiasm in the art exhibition at Antwerp in 1860, it passed into the possession of the King of Belgium, and Rennefeld's engraving of the picture soon made the tour of the world. It was followed by a series of other paintings of the Merovingian era: first, Guntram Boso who, while conducting his daughters from Poitiers, is attacked on the way by Chilperich's men and, after commending the poor girls to God and His saints, kills their leader and saves his children. The death of Galsvintha, who is strangled for Fredegunde's sake, is also mentioned here.

Being perfectly familiar with the history of the Frankish Kings, he had also known the story of the most prominent poet of their time, Venantius Fortunatus, who is so closely associated with the life of the saintly Radegunde. This pious princess, deeply incensed because her husband Chlotar had stained his hands with the blood of the last son of the Thuringian kings, had left him and found peace in the convent of Poitiers. How gratefully she must have listened to the poet in priestly garb, as in the abbess' quiet cell he read aloud to her the elegy upon the fall of the Thur-

ingian Kingdom, her beloved home. He had clothed it in the form of a letter to the last surviving scion of her illustrious race and sent it to Constantinople, where the latter had retired. He had also sung the hapless Galsvintha's fate and, though his verses are often impure and not wholly free from the affectation and offensive want of taste of his time, many lines are marked by genuine warmth of heart, an emotion he seems to have felt for the cloistered queen, and which his whole bearing expresses in the beautiful picture "Venantius reading his poems to Radegunde."

The year 1863 was specially momentous to Tadema, for in it he lost his beloved mother, made his first visit to Italy (Florence, Rome, and Naples) and married his first wife, a young French girl of the ancient noble family of Dumoulin de Bougirard. The "Praetextatus" and the "Venantius reading his Verses" are the first paintings emanating from his pilgrimage to Rome that became known to us, and Vosmaer is right when — especially in the last named picture — he notes a perceptible improvement over Tadema's earlier productions, admirable as they were

in their way. This refers particularly to the coloring and the vigor and clearness with which the artist expresses his conception.

Tadema's artistic genius, like his whole character, is thoroughly open, frank, and joyous, and he could not possibly find constant pleasure in the scenes of horror and deeds of rude violence of the Merovingian epoch, no matter how many picturesquely effective subjects they might offer. Therefore in Italy he turned from the Frank royal family, and if in the "Praetextatus," the "Venantius," and the three pictures from the life of an honorable woman (Galsvintha) painted in 1878, he went back to it again, it was probably because he had planned the first picture before this departure, and the second united, as it were, the old material with the fresh matter that poured in upon him from Rome and Hellas. Venantius Fortunatus' verses were written in the language of Horace and often contain echoes of the poetry of the Roman classic writers. He was attracted by these greater men; but it is still a marvel that one so thoroughly familiar with the Merovingian era did not use the Bishop of Vienna, Eididius Avitus,

whose "Beginning of the World" has been shown by Guizot to bear so close a resemblance to Milton's "Paradise Lost."

While in Italy he lost his taste for the representation of isolated historical events. He fared, as every student of history must fare under the present method of historical instruction in all schools and with the contents and arrangement of our historical text-books — history in them means simply political history. What is taught is the fate of reigning families and individual kings, the encounters of nations in war and battles, and the development of strength or the decline in power and loss of territory of different peoples. Better teachers discuss the characters of the rulers and other striking personal traits, as well as the legislation of governments; but they, too, are more eager to accurately describe the course of a bloody battle than to enter into the daily life of the contending nations, and carefully delineate the course of existence in time of peace.

The student leaves the gymnasium with the knowledge of numerous political events, many names of

kings, and dates. Not until, released from school restraint, he goes back independently to the sources of information, does he discover that he has learned little of the character and life of the peoples he has been shown. He has only known them in a state of turmoil and restless excitement. As soon as the sensible lover of the historic life of mankind discovers this fact, he turns from the political history of royal families and governments, and perceives that a people's true history is the history of its civilization, which teaches the normal character of nations, their life in a condition of health, and he joyfully perceives how much more delightful it is to make himself familiar with the homes of the people to be investigated, the regulations of their government, their civil and social life, their religion and science, than to know the names and bloody deeds of their kings and the battles they fought.

From the kingdom of the Franks Tadema turned, as has been said, to Rome and Hellas, and here the progress of civilization awakened an interest that far outweighed every other. If he had commenced by

picturing with brush and pencil isolated events that had occurred in the Merovingian royal family, in Rome, the world's centre, his gaze extended to the borders of the earth, and instead of seeking subjects in the pages of a vivid historian, he fixed his eyes on the nations of antiquity, and without troubling himself much about their political history, began to investigate their life in all its phases. The aspect of nature in Southern Europe appealed powerfully to his soul. The deep blue of the sky which overarches Italy, the varying hues of the waves that wash its shore, made a profound impression upon him and blended their glitter with the sunny radiance of his own artist soul. He examined marble, the mother of so many works of art, wherever he found it: in its quarry, amid ruins, and in new palaces, and learned to know it in every stage of its existence, every shade of coloring, and every imaginable light. Like a beloved friend, whom we clasp until every feeling of his soul lies open before us, he penetrated all the mysteries of this wonderful stone and learned to represent it new and weather-beaten, in monotone and variegated, in the brightest sunlight and

the deepest shadow, with such fidelity to nature that the critic's searching gaze cannot distinguish the painted marble in his pictures from the genuine. With equal care he studied the green of the cypress, the brilliant colors of the poppies and anemonies of the South, the pale pink hues of the oleander blossoms and the noble form and tint of the pines. I have spent delightful sunny days with him on the shore of the Mediterranean, and witnessed how tenderly he appropriated to himself nature in the South, how untiringly he searched for a certain shrub he meant to use, and how widely his soul opened to the spell of light and color with which the Ligurian strand is so richly blessed. One beautiful spring morning — the sea was sparkling like pure sapphires and the prince's garden, after a rainy day, was displaying the most luxuriant vernal green foliage — he stood silently beside me a long time, revelling in this splendor; at last, drawing a deep breath, he exclaimed: "Can there be anything more superb? And yet fools say that pale-green and blue do not harmonize!"

He entered into the lives of the men of ancient

times as thoroughly as into the natural scenery of Southern Europe, and soon became familiar with everything relating to the persons and surroundings of the rulers, the nobles' dress, the arms and ornaments of the army; but he was even more eager to learn the appearance of the citizens' houses, the workshops of artists and artisans, the markets and the baths. The sailor's boat, the fisherman's net, the labor of the vine-dresser and husbandman — everything appertaining to the daily life of the ancients — from the noblest work of art to the most insignificant clay jug the potter turned on his wheel — possessed interest for him. His scientific perception carried him into the very heart of family life. Every garment, every ornament which had been worn by men and women, nay, even the way that the children had been clothed and educated became familiar to him. He soon understood the arrangement of the houses so thoroughly that he could assign each utensil its proper place — there is not a piece of furniture, not a vessel possessed by the ancients of which he does not own specimens or copies. The same remark may be made of musical instruments, and no living

man knows better how they were used by the ancients, and in what way the latter trod the mazes of the dance. He collected every scrap of information that has reached our day about social pleasures in Egypt, Rome, and Hellas, and when he shows his friends paying the last honors to the dead, it might be supposed that he had witnessed the wailing of the widows, and the grief of the king from whom the will of the Supreme Being had snatched his first-born. Though he had not remained ignorant during his school-days of the religion of ancient times, he now investigated the temple ruins in Italy and made himself acquainted with the costumes and privileges of the priests, the routine of the worship, the sacrifices, and festal processions.

He probably reads and studies many an ancient poet and author and the best books upon the life of ancient times, but the sources from whence he obtains the largest and best material are the monuments themselves. There is no bronze or marble monument, no wall-painting, no vase-picture, no mosaic, no work of the ancient potter's, stone-cutter's, or goldsmith's art,

which he has not studied and placed in the treasury of his knowledge. So at last he could not help feeling as much at home in ancient as in modern times. The epoch of human life when the good and the beautiful, uniting, hovered before the struggling soul as the final end to be attained, was far nearer to him and offered much deeper satisfaction to his genius than his own time, when beauty is overshadowed by utility, goodness by craft, and it is considered as commendable to withdraw from nature as in ancient times it was held praiseworthy to dwell near to her and live in accordance with her laws. His idealistic spirit yearned to escape from a society which, like the blasé, values only what is called real; and if in this flight he sought for kindred by whom he was sure of being understood as he understood, he certainly found them in his beloved "ancients." He became one of them, and in return for his loving appreciation of every emotion of their beautiful and natural lives, they gave him graceful and lofty, touching and bewitching subjects.

Tadema has often been called the archaeologist of artists, and not unjustly, for he is more familiar with

the scenes of ancient life he depicts than many a scientist; but his knowledge is as free from the dust of books as the astronomy of the desert Arab, who has learned to find his way by the firmament over his head, because the mute, eternal wanderers of the sky point out his path through the darkness and adorn the cool, gracious night, which is far dearer to him than the scorching glare of day.

In the same way, Tadema obtains his knowledge of ancient life because its purely human civilization seems to him infinitely more attractive than the sober present, to which destiny sent him too late. Gay and untrammelled as his ancients themselves, he stands before the easel, and if the picture he creates, both in detail and as a whole, is as thoroughly and faultlessly antique as though he had summoned to his aid a whole arsenal of learned paraphernalia, he has done nothing except recall to mind the costume, house, utensils, garden and room of a dear friend, to whose home he has often invited himself as a guest, and where he has looked around him with open eyes. Antiquity is the home of his genius, and therefore this genius seeks its materials

there. It would be foreign to him to seek subjects in the present. The whole world belongs to the artist, and even time imposes no barriers upon him. Any material which possesses a human interest is available, but to represent a subject chosen from a period and situations so remote, in such a manner that it bewitches and appeals to the hearts of posterity, requires the one thing which renders Tadema's pictures of ancient life so unique and inimitable: thorough sympathy with the period to be represented. He has obtained an intellectual citizenship among the ancients, and it is by virtue of having become one of them that he can represent their life with such peerless reality and truth.

In 1863, at the portal as it were of his road through antiquity, he created his first Egyptian picture. In reply to my query how he had reached the people to whom, for a quarter of a century, I have devoted the best time and strength of my life, he said:

"Where else should I have commenced when I first began to make myself familiar with the life of the ancients? The first thing the child learns of ancient

times leads it to the court of the Pharaohs, to Goshen in Egypt, and when we go back to the source of the art and science of the other nations of antiquity how often we reach your Egypt!"

Besides, there was something in the grandeur and peculiarity of Egyptian art, and the original, orderly, and profoundly moral civilization of the Egyptian nation, which awed, attracted, and fascinated him. Like all true artists and lovers of art, his eyes were open to the beauty of the works, not only of the architects, but the sculptors of ancient Egypt, and I have seen Drake, Gnauth, and other famous artists as well as he, gazing with admiration at the sculptures of the ancient kingdom, and heard painters like G. Richter, Gentz, Lenbach, and Piloty speak of them. I saw the distinguished archaeologist Friederichs, who died so prematurely, change his opinion while standing before these sculptures in the museum of Boulak, and from a scorner become a panegyrist of Egyptian art. Tadema speaks with the greatest warmth of the decorative art of the Egyptians, so many beautiful specimens of which have been preserved on the monuments along

the Nile. He is ready to recognize beauty wherever he meets it and, with his marked appreciation of what is peculiar, even finds great pleasure in the painting of the Japanese and has used numerous Japanese subjects in the decoration of the artistic interior of his house in London.

Vosmaer makes his Aisma, — for whom Tadema served as a model, — in answer to the question: "What! Japanese? Do you call that beautiful?" give a reply which exactly coincides with our master's opinion:

"Beautiful? Admirable! Their flowers and animals are masterly. Look at Mrs. van Buren's fan; but *look*, look closely, observe carefully. Can anything be more graceful, firmer, or more freely and boldly sketched?"

Then he compares Pompeian wall-paintings with the pictures on the Japanese fan, and says:

"Now look at these flowers, sprays, and birds, what firm, spirited drawing! Sometimes they go still farther. Do you remember in one of the halls a sparrow on a branch, gray-green, downy, almost colorless, — it is masterly."

In the same way the firm drawing and spirited designs of the exquisite bas-reliefs in the tombs of the Pharaonic era pleased him. With the aid of his vivid imagination he understood how to release them from the stone, infuse them with the warm blood of life, and place them, animated and sentient, in new relations of his own invention, yet which bore the stamp of the peculiar Egyptian features that renders it so easy for antiquarians to distinguish the Pharaonic period from all others. While doing this he carefully avoided the errors a strictly hieratical canon compelled the Egyptian artists and sculptors to commit, and cautiously relaxed what seems stiff and rigid in the monuments, for he knew that the Egyptians were no nation of prim pedants, but excitable, prone to joyous festal mirth, keen witticism, and passionate grief. Yet, when he represents them under the spell of their priestly laws, he understands how to give them so stiff and solemn a bearing that one might suppose they had just stepped out of the reliefs on the walls of temple or tomb. Still, even here, we vainly seek for those peculiarities binding rules must have imposed. When

the Egyptians forgot life's cares in holiday pleasures, they must have appeared as he represented them in his first Egyptian picture (1863). "A Festival three thousand years ago." Many an inhabitant of Memphis has stood before his house like the dignified

GROUP OF CHESS-PLAYERS.

man he painted two years later, and how true to life, yet how thoroughly Egyptian is the "Group of Chess-Players" (1865), the bold pencil sketch of which I have seen and sincerely admired. To behold a man who usually dispenses with clothing,

engaged in an occupation which presupposes a high degree of intellectual development, is somewhat perplexing to us, and because this nude figure is doing something wholly unlike what we are accustomed to see in men of his ilk the impression produced upon us is powerful and pleasing. Certain conventional ideas have been formed concerning the character of every nation. Just as most persons consider the Frenchman frivolous, they imagine the Egyptian dull and gloomy. To think of him as light-hearted indicates a better knowledge of his life. Admirably as Tadema understands how to depict the Egyptian at his games, amid holiday pleasures, and in moments of joyous excitement, his success is even more masterly, as we shall see, in picturing him in the most tragical moments of existence.

I have endeavored in what has been said to sum up Tadema's relations to the ancients. The viewer of his paintings may be sure that everything they show him accurately represents a past reality, and so far they are instructive, but this quality is far inferior in value to the fact that whatever he creates reveals to us a wealth

of beauty which finds its way to the soul capable of appreciating the beautiful. They teach us to see nature and men more clearly than is granted to the eyes of those whose brow the muse has not kissed; we behold in them the fleeting visions of life retained in permanent forms and flooded with that magical charm which, when we seek to express it in words, we call, "poetic."

In such a manner he has brought near to us the most varied aspects and emotions of life. The figures he shows us usually wear the garb of ancient times, yet they are neither old nor new, but purely human, and when he makes the child laugh or the widow weep, it is not only a little Roman or a Frank princess who laughs or mourns, but the careless child and the woman who has lost her husband, as they must have laughed or wept in any age of the world. He has full possession of that gift of genius which represents, in a single individual, the type of a whole class, and his Roman girl, bringing towels to the ladies who are bathing, is not the bath-attendant Lydia or Syra, but the "balneatrix;" the man reading his verses aloud is not merely Venantius Fortunatus, but the type of the

author reading his works. His purpose is always and everywhere distinctly intelligible, and one need not be an art-critic to fully appreciate the charm of form and coloring in figures and scenes placed in the brightest light, and enjoy with his whole soul the elegance and faultless care which distinguish everything that leaves this master's studio.

From boyhood he has known how to fit up his work-room in a way that satisfied his sense of beauty. Even in Brussels his studio, 51, Rue du Palais, obtained a certain degree of celebrity on account of its thoroughly artistic and extremely peculiar style of decoration. From this studio, besides the pictures already mentioned, came the following creations: "Home from Market" (1865). The porter of a Roman house is opening the door for his mistress, who is returning from the flower-market with her little daughter and her slaves. This is a genre picture from the heart of Roman life, and the same remark may be made of its successor, though Tadema has taken his subject from a book, the poems of Catullus. He was particularly charmed by this natural and thoughtful poet, so he

ROPE JUMPER. — (A CRAYON SKETCH).

painted him with his beloved Lesbia (1865) and showed us the same beauty in another picture, where she was grieving over her dead bird. In this he followed the pretty poem "On the Sparrow," in which the Roman, whose erotic imagination often knows neither curb nor rein, understands how to trifle so charmingly. A girl's eyes, reddened by weeping for the death of a bird, sounds modern, and had not Catullus himself sung it, and Juvenal written to satiety of another little maid,

> Who wept until her eyes were red,
> Over her darling sparrow dead.
>
> (Turbavit cujus nitidos extinctus passer ocellos).

our critical reformers who — because they themselves do not know the ancients — brand as anachronisms every touch of sentiment in representations of ancient life, would have pronounced this charming picture "a modern subject in an antique mask." A Berlin wiseacre — I think it was in the Tribune — actually declared it to be a lamentable error to make a Roman

woman "who had no pity for animals" weep over a dead bird.

From the Brussels studio also came: "Agrippina with the ashes of Germanicus;" the "Entrance to a Roman theatre," where, as the play-bill shows, a piece by Terence is to be performed; the "Preparations for a Festival in a Pompeian House," a picture in which the artist's power and subtle sense of beauty is most brilliantly shown in the girl weaving garlands, as well as the charming painting: "Glaucus and Lydia."

In 1867, after having so long drawn his material from the private life of the ancients, he again turned to history and produced two historical paintings: "The Praetorians summoning Claudius to the imperial throne after the murder of Caligula," (freshly treated and repeated in 1872) and "Tarquinius Superbus." This picture represents the arrogant ruler striking off the heads of the poppies which have grown taller that the others in the field. I have not had the privilege of seeing this painting myself, but competent art-critics give it a specially high rank on account of its depth and richness of coloring and the beautiful contrast

DANCING GIRL. — (A CRAYON SKETCH).

between the outside wall lying deep in shadow and the field of poppies glittering in the sunlight.

In 1867, he also created the "Egyptians Lamenting the Dead." In one of the small side temples which the inscriptions describe as the birth-houses of the divinity, that is the place where Isis bore the young Horus, the mummy of the departed one lies upon a bier, beside which stands the sarcophagus that is to receive it. The place is subtly chosen, for the divinity said to be born here is Horus, that is, the principle of the eternal renewal of nature, and like the young god the soul of the dead, by another birth, is to behold the light of a new world. The widow, deeply absorbed in her grief, kneels at the feet of the mummy, while priests chant lamentations to the notes of lutes and sistrums. The thick fan-shaped leaves of the palm-trees in the temple-groves peer through the openings between the pillars, bending to bestow shade and blessing upon the scene of sorrow and death. How genuinely Egyptian is every architectural form, every instrument, every countenance, yet how profoundly and thoroughly human is this magnificent work of art!

At the same time as the "Egyptians Lamenting the Dead" or shortly after its completion, Tadema, perhaps to shake off the anguish to which he had given such vivid expression, painted the Siesta (1868) a superb picture of Greek life, full of the most blissful repose.

> In the cool shade rest thee now!
> Fair, Bathyllus, is this tree;
> Through its foliage to and fro
> Zephyr wanders dreamily.

In this painting — of life-size — a youth and an old man, like Anacreon and his favorite, have sat down together in friendly companionship. Surrounded by an atmosphere of sweet repose, they listen, under the protection of Aphrodite, the bestower of happiness, amid flowers, wine, and fruit, to the dulcet tones of a flute.

Tadema's next picture also transports us to Greece, and this time to Athens in the period of its most brilliant development. It shows us Phidias himself, after

he has completed the frieze for the Parthenon, the noblest of all works of sculpture. The procession at the Panathenaic festival, with its handsome youths, steeds, and riders, is finished. A light barrier separates the spectators on the scaffold from the creating artist. The bearded man in the centre behind this barrier, with the roll in his right hand, is the master himself, who with modest confidence has invited the principal personages in Athens to view his completed work. Who could the youth at the left, standing among the spectators beyond the barrier, be save Alcibiades? The dignified man opposite Phidias who, absorbed in contemplation, grasps the rope with both hands, must be Pericles, the beautiful woman on his right, Aspasia. A remarkable painting! The artist understands how to reproduce the marble the sculptor uses, and the most marvellous creation of sculpture is here paid the highest honor in a masterpiece of the art of coloring.

As a bright companion-piece to this grave picture appeared the charming "Flower-Girl," who, with the gay children of the spring she offers for sale, will

probably remind every one of Dionysius' graceful epigram: *

> "Roses are blooming on thy cheek, with roses thy basket is laden,
> Which dost thou sell? The flowers? Thyself? Or both, my pretty maiden?"

The "Boudoir" and "The Embarkation" are subjects drawn from the private life of Roman citizens. The latter picture, a little masterpiece of the most delicate effects of color, I have admired in the house of the famous Dutch marine-artist Mesdag, a home rich in the most exquisite pearls of the art of painting. In the "Sick-Chamber" and another superb picture, which we might call "Before Churching"—it might have served our own Claus Meyer as a model—he has been pleased to join the ranks of the old Netherland painters.

In 1870, he completed the charming picture "Lesbia's House" (the poet's beautiful love is listening to

* Six years before, this same epigram suggested to the writer of this essay a scene in "An Egyptian Princess." Vol. II. page 197.

Catullus' verses). Then our master began his superb "Vintage Festival." This composition — whose length would seem to indicate that it was intended for the decoration of a frieze — is so well known in Germany, through Blanchard's engraving, that I need enter into no minute description. The brightest light floods the temple which the vine-dressers have entered to give thanks for the blessings of the autumn. Before them, with a light, dancing step, moves the beautiful young priestess of the god, with vine-leaves twined amid her waving golden hair, and in her hand the torch with which she is to light the fire upon the altar of the divinity.

How graceful are the movements of the girls who accompany with the music of the double flute and tambourine the singing of the multitude in the hall which opens in the background; how vigorous are the men who bear in their strong arms the huge jars containing the gift of the god. Quietly, yet deeply penetrated by a devout feeling of gratitude, the procession moves forward, and the most genuine holiday mood cheerily and reverently pervades temple and throng.

The marble gleams, the bronze shimmers in marvellous hues, and in the clear radiant light of this festal day every face, every utensil, every ornament, every seam between the stones has its full and complete value. Whoever remembers this picture feels as if he had been permitted to share as a guest in the holiday rejoicing of the Hellenes.

This rare work of art was not finished in Brussels, but in London. Tadema had lost his wife and a son in the Belgian capital, and had learned by experience that, though the Netherlanders knew how to value and praise his art, they were by no means inclined to make even the smallest sacrifice for the artist. It is scarcely credible, yet in Graaff's biography of Tadema the statement may be read in italics, as an undeniable fact, that from 1856 to 1880 — nearly a quarter of a century — our master did not earn in his wealthy native country, Holland, more than a thousand florins, though a painting he disposed of in 1867 for six hundred florins was resold for thirteen thousand. Even after he had reached the pinnacle of fame, neither the king, the government, nor any art institute in his

native land gave him the smallest order. Nor was any attempt made to obtain one of his masterpieces, though in England and America his pictures were worth their weight in gold, and the people of France, Germany, and Belgium coveted a sight of them, loaded them and their creator with the most distinguished honors, and more than once purchased them at a high, nay the highest price.

Even an artist wants a livelihood, and England, which not only knew how to value his paintings but was disposed to obtain the works of his genius at a suitable price, attracted him with powerful magnets. The English character pleased the Frieselander, whose race is akin to the Anglo-Saxons; many influential friends and fellow-artists urged him to go to Great Britain, and finally his heart also drew him thither, for one of the fairest daughters of Albion, Miss Laura Epps, herself a talented artist, returned his love and in 1871 gave him her hand in marriage.

So, with his first wife's two pretty little daughters (Laurence and Anne) he moved to London and there established a second home. The first picture he

finished in it was the "Vintage Festival" commenced in Brussels, a description of which has been given above.

The beauty and oddity of the decorations and furniture of the studio where he gave it the last stroke of the brush, and the rooms adjoining this studio in Townshend House, Regent's Park, the part of London which least lacks the light and open air the artist needs, must soon become famed far beyond the borders of England. True, a few years after he had crossed the "Salve" on the threshold of this new home (1874) a large portion of the rare articles and pieces of furniture in it were destroyed by a terrible explosion at the neighboring North Gate, but he soon repaired the damage and made Townshend House what it is now: the delight of all lovers of art, beauty, comfort, and a luxury that pleases the eye, offers it the most charming and varied impressions, and stirs the mind to question and investigate. Its creation would be impossible even for the millions of a Croesus, though he should obtain the aid of a great artist, because the latter does not evoke for a stranger all the

ideas of comfort and beauty that dwell in his mind; and nothing but living in his own home will suggest to his genius such novel and happy ideas for supplying what is deficient as well as perfecting what was already beautiful and charming.

The lower story of the Tadema-home resembles externally a Pompeian house, but its proportions are so noble that this does not immediately strike the eye. The knocker — a bronze antique mask — falls upon the steel plate on the massive outer door, and we cross the hospitable "Salve" of the threshold. The lower story is the special abode of the mistress of the house. Here is her studio, a pleasant room, in whose simple, but comfortable and graceful furniture and ornaments, many Japanese designs are blended. The piano in daily use is adorned with exquisite decorations by the hand of Tadema and his wife, and on one wall of this cosy room the master's superb picture "The Death of the First-born," of which I have yet to write, reminds us of the seriousness of life.

From this studio, where many a charming picture by Mrs. Laura Tadema was finished, we pass through

a peculiar apartment, hung with Spanish leather, into a cheerful reception-room that pleasantly recalls the viridarium of Roman houses. The dining-room, exquisitely adorned with flower and fruit pieces in water-colors, adjoins this apartment, which after a meal is inimitably inviting for rest, reverie, or conversation. Luxuriant leaf-plants, in tubs of a singularly artistic shape, transport us in imagination into the open air, an illusion heightened by a jet of water flowing from an antique mask into a marble basin. Its low plashing increases the dreamy mood, as night and day it rises to Dalou's bust of the master, which stands above the fountain. A hammock invites sleep and Chinese lanterns, suspended from the ceiling, diffuse a varying but pleasant light through this peaceful green nook. The lower story also contains the library. Here books adorn the walls; but in the Gothic table, made after Tadema's own design, art again asserts itself.

The staircase leading to the upper story is plain. An ornamental border, in which a pomegranate design appears, runs along the dark-brown walls; but there is

LORENZ ALMA TADEMA'S STUDIO.

little color to be seen here, for the ascending visitor beholds a row of photographs of the master's paintings. Above is the workshop from which these creations came, are still coming, and it is to be hoped may long continue to come, unless Tadema should find himself obliged (owing to the sinking of the ground) to exchange his present home for a new and perhaps still more beautiful one. It is a handsome, well-lighted, square apartment. At the entrance, on the right, stands a statue of the master, whose own hand has adorned the walls with exquisitely-chosen Pompeian designs in the subdued tints the untrained eye often pronounces faded, but which could not have been different in ancient days, because — Tadema's own remark — the mosaics, where the hues of the stones are perpetual, are colored with the same wise moderation. Every ornament here is Greek, and in the chests behind the curtains are kept the costumes and archaeological works the artist needs for his models and for occasional reference. Pieces of furniture of antique design serve to complete the studio, where an artist of ancient Pompeii would undoubtedly

feel at home. This scene of the most untiring industry rarely lacks plants in bloom.

Once Tadema was fascinated for weeks by a large oleander which he had taken with him from Brussels to London, where for the first time it covered itself with blossoms. He had no peace until he had succeeded in fixing upon canvas the wealth and delicacy of its luxuriant rose-hued flowers — and how thoroughly he knows the charm of color and the life of the anemones he learned to love upon the Riviera, and which are frequently sent to him from there by friends, how he studies, enjoys, and reproduces the roses, poppies, and other bright-hued children of Flora! There they stand, so true to nature that one feels tempted to please the sense of touch with their velvety softness, yet looking more closely one discovers that their perfect resemblance to the originals is by no means due to a wearisome number of strokes of the brush. Tadema himself has called his friends' attention to the apparent ease with which they were produced. A happy stroke transfers them from the retina of the eye, which so faithfully retains everything

the artist's glance perceives, to the wall or canvas, and what has once been accurately seen and noted may dispense with labored and painstaking execution.

A few steps lead from the studio to several communicating rooms of moderate size. In the first the wainscoted ceiling is supported by marble Ionic columns, Oriental rugs of rare beauty cover the inlaid floor, and cushions of exquisite colors lie heaped on chairs and divans. None of these rooms are separated from each other by doors; arched entrances divide them, and in the doorway of the pillared chamber hangs a wonderful old curtain — well-nigh matchless — brought from the palace of a Venetian noble. In the next apartment, the Gold Room, the light falls through panes of Mexican onyx, which subdues it sufficiently to lend this rare chamber the magical, yet not dazzling brilliancy Tadema wished to give it. Walls and ceiling are entirely covered with gilding, and it is difficult to imagine the effect produced by this unusual decoration when illumined with sunlight tempered by the onyx panes. This remarkable style of ornament is due to a lucky accident. Tadema at first had only tried what

the effect would be if he used gold, the natural frame of pictures, as a background for the paintings to be hung here; but when he found how admirably the gilded walls looked, he put up no pictures, but created the Gold Room and furnished it with equal elegance and taste. That the impression produced is very brilliant is a matter of course, and Meynet's opinion that it is exactly in harmony with the taste of the ancients, especially that of Later Rome and the Byzantines, is perfectly correct. Nero, with all his crimes a thorough artist in his nature, wanted to live in a golden palace; why should not the painter of ancient Rome try a golden room? Over the wide entrance to this unique apartment, on each side of a beautiful rosette, is a semicircular arch, and these two arches, with the beam on which they rest, form two niches, in which rare antique vases and other choice specimens of ancient pottery are arranged with picturesque abundance in apparent disorder. From them an ample curtain of Chinese silk, in shades of yellow, blue, and gold, hangs to the floor, which is made of ebony and maple. Along the wall runs a socle five feet high of

Byzantine design, above whose beautiful cornice is an exquisite miniature copy in ivory, upon an ebony background, of Phidias' famous procession of mounted men from the frieze of the Parthenon. With this exception the eye, wherever it turns, sees nothing but glittering gold; and the few dark pieces of furniture, as well as the large silver mixing-vessel (a copy of the superb one found at Hildesheim) the bright-hued curtain, and the strange specimens of foreign art in the dark niches often glow with magical reflected lights.

In this room also stands the Tadema grand piano, which has attained a certain renown and scarcely has its equal in the world, not only on account of the rare beauty of its Byzantine form, the costly materials from which it is manufactured, and the ornamental band with which Tadema has adorned it, but because it contains a very rare collection of autographs. The inner side of the movable lid is partly covered with fine parchment, on which all the virtuosos who have played on the instrument have written their names, and it is rare that any noted musician leaves London without

having visited Townshend House and played before a larger or smaller circle. This Gold Room adjoins a charming little apartment, fitted up in every detail like an old-fashioned room in Holland. This is lighted by an exquisite Renaissance window, and is the scene of our friend's happy family life and earnest labor. He has so arranged it that his artistic eye can find pleasure wherever he turns. What would exert a disturbing influence upon the scientist is a necessity to the artist, and where luxury clothes itself in genuine artistic forms — as it does here — it should be greeted as a living expression of a self-sacrificing appreciation of beauty.

Vosmaer justly remarks that since Tadema's removal to London, or rather since his marriage to a daughter of Albion, his female figures have been different from those of former days. They obtain more robust proportions, a loftier, nobler stature, and the golden hair of the Anglo-Saxon race often gleams from his pictures. This hair also adorns the graceful head of his wife, who deserves mention as a type of the aristocratic beauty of English women.

The first four pictures commenced and finished in Townshend House after wedding this rare life-companion were "Pottery" the "Fête intime," "Reproaches" and "Cherries."

The last picture represents a beautiful woman reclining on a tiger-skin and, in restful ease, feasting her eyes on the glittering cherries she is about to eat. It is nearly life-size, and he gave it to the *cercle artistique* in Holland, of which he had long been a member. "Caligula's Murder" was again painted here, and then followed "Greek Wine," a bright picture from which seems to echo the lines of Rufinus:

> "Oh, Prodice, let us, when we bathe, with garlands our temples entwine,
>
> The while, from the beaker gigantic, gaily drink we the foaming new wine."

How many similar verses Tadema might have had in mind. One of the most beautiful — sung by Meleagros — has a flavor of modern sentiment and runs as follows:

"Mix, when thou dost fill the goblet,
With Heliodora's name the draught,
And on my brow the chaplet set
She gave me as the wine I quaffed!
With tears its roses seem bedewed,
As though the garland fair doth weep,
Because within mine arms I could
Not Heliodora's fair form keep."

The rose feels pity; flowers suggest transitoriness:

"Like this garland of flowers," sings a poet from the anthology of his Rhodoclea, "thou wilt bloom and fade." This fate will also be shared by the young Greek wife, who in the painting "The last Roses" is laying the late roses of autumn, as a pious offering, on the marble altar.

I have been obliged to subdue my tone and suggest by the last roses of the year and the next picture, "The Widow," thoughts of winter and the transitoriness of earthly happiness, because I knew that I was about to bring before the reader's notice a painting which, in my opinion, is the most touching ever created by an artist's genius. Tadema has called this remarkable

work "The last Plague." The destroying angel has entered the houses and palaces of Egypt. His terrible office is to slay every first-born, and the inexorable messenger of God has knocked at the heart of the young heir to the throne and forced it to stop beating. The room to which the artist leads us is perhaps a lofty one, but he has cut the canvas just above the heads of the pictured forms and we feel distressed and scarcely able to breathe in this narrow space, where sickness and sorrow have come, and the odor of incense, spices, and flowers oppresses the lungs. On the king's lap lies the heir slain by the pestilence, a beautiful boy, whose head rests on the knee of his mother, who, overwhelmed by passionate grief, presses her cheek upon her darling's motionless breast, stirred by no breath, no heart-throb. The dead child's arm hangs loosely down, the rigid fingers, as if seeking help, clutch the hem of his father's robe. A bandage still surrounds the brow which a short time ago burned with such feverish heat and ached with such unbearable pain. The father sits as though petrified. With his left hand he supports the young form, his right holds a flower;

the face is turned fully towards us. The fate that has overtaken him is stronger than he. Shall he pray? Shall he defy it? Shall he weep and join in his wife's loud lamentations? All these questions can be read in the features of this man, who holds himself so erect outwardly because he has lost his mental poise and would give way if he did not conquer himself. Beside him crouches the physician, the living embodiment of the naophoros every museum shows. He has done his best, and ere being summoned to convey the body to the embalmers, has time to think and ponder over the insufficiency of his skill. Through the doorway is seen the wailing multitude, and beyond them, Moses and Aaron awaiting with proud composure the monarch's decision. Funeral music is echoing through the chamber of death. The nobles of the land have thrown themselves before the king, perhaps to implore him to avert future horrors and comply with the demand of the terrible magicians outside: but he heeds them as little as though they were part of the stone floor.

It is this which stamps the picture with terrible

earnestness upon every spectator's soul. When I sent it to Gnauth (who died so prematurely) the director of the artistic portion of my work "Egypt in Picture and Word," he wrote: This picture produces the impression of a divine hymn.

To the Egyptologist it tells much that the untutored eye does not perceive. This is a resurrection of real Egyptian life! There is nothing which did not belong to the days of the Pharaohs. The halls of the palace of Rameses III. were like this wall, this china dish covered with flowers came from Tell el-Jēhūdīje, the physician wears the little cap of the Egyptian Æsculapius, Imhotep; the portable medicine-chest, every jar, the mode of arranging the women's hair, the head-gear of the men: everything is thoroughly accurate; and as if the master had foreseen what was not discovered until ten years after the completion of his work, he laid at the feet of the corpse a garland of flowers deceptively like those which have been found in the royal coffins at Dēr el-Bachri. Had Tadema finished nothing except this picture, he would still be entitled to number himself among the foremost artists of his age.

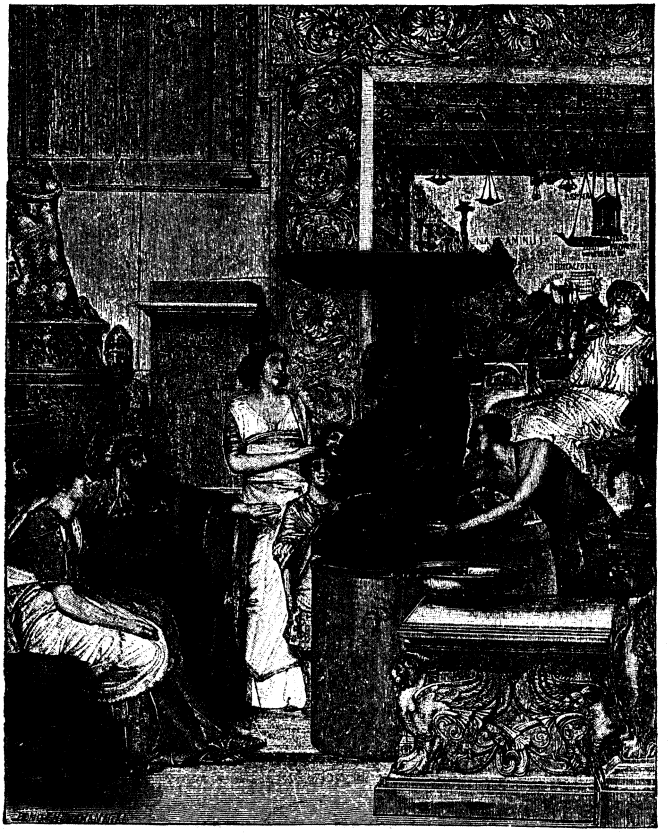
This painting made a great sensation, not only in London, but in Paris and Berlin, where it adorned the autumn art-exhibition of the Academy. Henceforth every lover of art in the capital, whenever a new exhibition was opened, looked at once for Tadema's pictures. In Munich, also, his genius was joyously recognized, and as he loves Germany and rarely neglects to have his larger works exhibited there, he soon gained citizenship among German artists. Like his master, Van Leys, he has often been in Germany, and with the linguistic talent he possesses to a peculiar degree, has learned to speak German so well that I was often surprised by the graceful, unusual, and thoroughly German phraseology he uses in fluent conversation. Of course he speaks Italian, while Frenchmen and Englishmen, when talking with him, take him for a fellow-countryman.

In 1874, he painted "Joseph, Overseer of the Granaries," a picture which, in regard to coloring, ranks among his best works. A copy may be found in my "Egypt," but it seems to me that in this painting he has allowed himself, in depicting the figure of the

Pharaoh on the throne, to be too much influenced by the mode of execution of the Egyptian artists, who were trammelled by their canons. On the other hand a magnificent and thoroughly real figure is represented in the young Jewish Minister of Finance, Joseph, reading aloud to his master from a papyrus-roll the new measures of economy he has adopted.

In the same year (1874) he returned to Rome, and painted first a Roman lady amusing herself by fishing in the pond adjoining her villa, and afterwards the two superb pictures respectively representing a gallery of sculpture and a gallery of paintings in ancient Rome. These works won him in Berlin the great gold medal, cast into the shade most of the other paintings in the exhibition of 1874, formed the daily topic of conversation in all art-circles, and paved the way to the highest external distinction a government has to bestow, and which has been obtained by few of his peers, the Prussian Order of Merit, received in 1881. They have become very well known through Blanchard's engravings, and Tadema afterwards used the same material again in an entirely different way.

The finest of these pictures have been accessible to few persons, as they are in the possession of the rich art publisher Gambard of Nice, who reluctantly opens to strangers his bewitchingly-located villa *Les Palmiers* — a true fairy palace, surrounded by the loveliest pleasure gardens and filled with superb paintings and statuary. Both are equally admirable in drawing, coloring, fidelity to nature, and archæological accuracy. In the Gambard "Sculpture Gallery" the centre of the picture is a superb vase of some valuable dark stone, which an elderly servant (the crescent-shaped ornament on his neck marks him as a slave) is turning on its pedestal to display it better to the aristocratic family who are admiring, and perhaps intend to purchase it. The marble tablet on the wall, and all the statues that form the gallery or collection are masterpieces of the art of imitation, and how true to life, how speaking, how exquisitely grouped are the persons who are directing their attention to the vase. The rich gentleman, who has sat down with his wife and is pointing out to her what he particularly admires in the work of art now being displayed; the children, who have advanced



SCULPTURE GALLERY IN ANCIENT ROME.

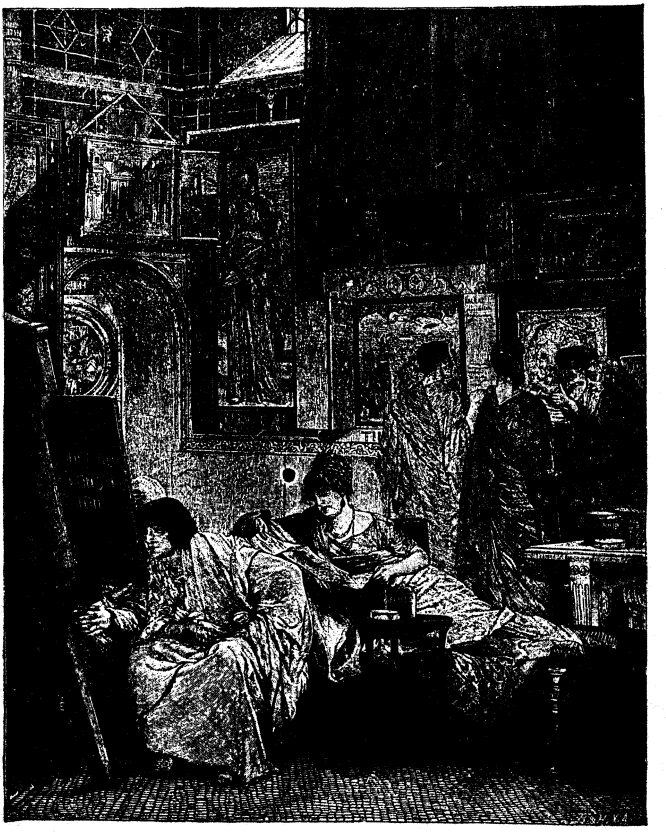
close to it and would like to touch it, as though it were already their property; the beautiful young woman behind them, perhaps their mother's sister, who is restraining them and yet gazing at the vase — all this is taken from the life and would be the same at the present day as in ancient Rome. In the second gallery the statue of Sophocles (Lateran) is the central point, and the art-conversation being carried on about it by a patrician of dignified bearing, a vivacious critic, and a Roman lady is so well depicted that one fancies one might follow it.

In the "Picture Gallery" the effects of light and color are really bewitching. Who can forget the bright sunshine streaming into the spacious hall through the window just below the ceiling? Yet the spectator remembers no less clearly the young artist who sits completely absorbed before the picture on the easel, as well as the aristocratic Roman lady on the divan, who is looking at it over his shoulder and holding a manuscript in her hand. She is less in earnest than the youth, and the papyrus might contain a description of the object represented, or simply the *ephemeris*, with the news of the day.

In the second representation of the same material special interest is aroused by the keen-eyed connoisseur before the picture, the plump beauty on the cushions, who is paying more heed to the painting than to her young companion's explanations, and the clever face of the critic. This man understands his business, yet he is not seeking something to praise, but something to condemn.

These two pictures possess a powerful spell of attraction. Each new study of their rich details bestows a fresh pleasure. We gaze with the spectators, are delighted with what these galleries contain, and their visitors are no less interesting than the galleries themselves; for each one is a real person whose face is worth learning to know, and with whom we should be glad to enter into conversation. I dislike to parade the technical catch-words of the art-critics; but it may be said that an equally harmonious melody of colors has echoed from few pictures.

In 1875, Tadema again went to Italy, and while there and after his return to England, he completed the "Cleopatra" and the three pictures to which he



PICTURE GALLERY IN ANCIENT ROME.

gave the name "The tragedy of an estimable woman." This color-trilogy refers to the unfortunate Galsvintha, whose sad fate, little as Gregory of Tours can tell of her, seems to have won Tadema's tender interest. They represent: Galsvintha's arrival with her dowry at her husband's court, her murder, and the miracle which is said to have occurred after her death. "A lamp"—so runs Gregory's narrative—"which was suspended over her tomb by a rope, fell upon the floor, though no one touched it, by the breaking of the rope, and the hard pavement yielding, sank into it as though it had been a soft mass, till it was covered, yet without sustaining any injury. All who saw it were amazed at the miracle," which is also related by Fortunatus.

"He is coming" takes us to Rome again. The festival of Bacchus has begun, the shouts and the music of the flutes have already died away, and the lovely — we will say Lydia — clad in a rose-colored robe, stands behind the curtain watching for her lover, who will clasp her in his arms, and inspired by the god whirl along in the throng of frantic revellers.*

* Blanchard has made an excellent engraving of this picture also.

The next painting is called "After the Dance." The festival of Bacchus is over, the pious frenzy has ended, and the weary Bacchante stretches her beautiful limbs on a wild beast's skin to rest.

After these genre pictures Tadema finished a larger one, which in the fullest sense of the word is an historical painting, though it represents no one movement in the history of the world. Here the artist has essayed to depict in lines and colors his idea of the power, influence, and environments of a Roman patrician. For with subtle tact he has chosen, not the emperor's court, where the armed guards, the numerous strange and superb details would have required too large a space, but the house of the greatest and most powerful private citizen in the reign of Octavius Augustus, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, whose proud device was: "Absolutely obedient, but only to *one*," and of whom Mæcenas is said to have remarked, that he had grown so great that there was nothing left for the emperor to do except kill him or make him his son-in-law. Every one knows him as Julia's husband, and whoever searches the ruins of Rome will find no builder's

AN AUDIENCE AT AGRIPPA'S.

name mentioned more frequently than his. Various aqueducts, such as the Aqua Julia and Virgo, the Pantheon, and countless other architectural works arose under his auspices. In his will he bequeathed to the people his gardens and the thermæ which bore his name, and Octavius, his principal heir, and whose most trustworthy confidant, counsellor, and general Agrippa had been, gave to the citizens of Rome, in honor of his memory, a hundred denarii per man.

In this picture the entrance to the house of this true noble (perhaps the palace of Antonius, presented by Octavius to his friend, and which was afterwards burned) faces the spectator. A magnificent wide staircase of costly marble leads to the spacious, open, pillared peristyle. The architecture is grand and stately, worthy of Agrippa. On the plain pedestal at the foot of the steps stands a lofty statue, not the one of Agrippa himself, erected to him by the city of Athens on the Acropolis, but that of the only man he knew how to obey, Octavius Augustus. It had been intended for the Pantheon, but the emperor had for-

bidden that it should be placed there, so one of Julius Cæsar had been substituted. At the foot of this statue stands a group of supplicants: a noble-looking man in the costume of an Oriental prince, who with his wife or daughter has come to ask a boon of the citizen before whom kings bowed. The daughter holds in her hand a costly golden vessel, either to offer it as a gift to their exalted patron or to pour a libation before him as if he were a god (an inscription in Mytilene calls him "god and preserver"). Their young companion is calling to the prince, — who is pondering over the words with which he is to touch the heart of the omnipotent Roman, — that Agrippa is coming, and in fact he appears on the staircase. Calmly and silently he moves with quiet dignity down the steps, followed at a respectful distance by a throng of clients. The attention of every figure represented — and the spectator's also — is centred upon the solitary man midway down the staircase, who obeys only *one*, even in the presence of that *one*, who from his marble pedestal silently towers above the whole scene. The throng of patricians following Agrippa are expecting his sign, the

noble petitioners are waiting in breathless suspense. Soon he will step upon the threshold where the tiger-skin lies, and the prince will stop him to listen to his business, his daughter will offer her gift and pay him homage as a god, the clients will stand still as though spellbound, until it has pleased the great man to grant or refuse the boon, set his foot on the lowest step, and enter the street.

How complete is the unity existing between the numerous parts of this scene, how fully it expresses the idea of the boundless power of a great citizen of greater Rome! What a wealth of marvellous color this picture contains, how varied and peculiar are the tints, yet how harmoniously they blend together. In no other painting have I seen stone painted in such undefined hues, but nature has showed us the same or similar ones, and the lighter shades of the robes and the tiger-skin in the foreground contrast with them as the sharper notes of well-tuned flutes stand forth from the music of the softer instruments in the execution of a fine symphony. Long treatises upon the influential position of a man like Agrippa cannot teach what this

picture silently, yet with indelible distinctness, impresses upon the mind of every beholder.

In 1876 came the charming picture "Hide and Seek," which I have had copied. It transports us to the Roman Villa Albani. The long flight of steps that leads through the garden to the summer palace is entirely deserted. The noonday sun shines on the bright marble, and even the lofty *hermæ* on the terrace afford scanty shade. Who would linger in the open air now, who would not prefer to rest in the cool shadow of the villa? But love and children at play do not ask about the position of the sun, and the wild little maid — perhaps the gardener's daughter — has hidden behind the *herma* and is listening for the playmate who is seeking her and steals up so softly that he will surprise the wilful elf with the thick locks of hair and the saucy eyes. The boy has won in the game of hide and seek; but will he not lose in the more serious one with this fairy lassie?

Tadema's "Hope and Fear" shows us the figure of an old man who resembles Priam and Nestor; his "Nymphäum" is a beautiful woman who, not yet dis-

HIDE AND SEEK.

robed, lies stretched on the costly mosaic pavement, supported by a cushion, and gazes half-searchingly, half-dreamily, into the warm water that invites her to bathe. The "balneatrix" is bringing warm towels to wipe the lady's limbs, after she emerges from the bath. Another exquisite painting shows us Roman women bathing in the rushing water of the thermæ.

THE "BALNEATRIX."

A great sensation was made by "The Sculptor's Model," a picture of life-size,

completed in 1877, which was suggested to the artist by the excavation of the so-called Esquiline Venus (discovered in 1874). The model in this work of art is represented in the same attitude its sculptor gave it. The warm flesh tones of the beautiful nude limbs form an extremely effective contrast to the cool gray of the bas-relief on the wall behind. The slender, girlish figure is well rounded, but not voluptuous, and the deeply-shadowed, delicately-cut features tell a whole history. This young creature has come to the studio reluctantly and, as she stands holding up her hair with the left hand while the right rests on a palm-branch, she is vexed that she is compelled to pose as a model and the time seems long. Outside of art-circles this superb picture would probably be less pleasing than many other creations of the master, but the connoisseur must hold it in specially high esteem for the marvellous effects of light, in which it is so rich, and the exquisite golden tones of its coloring. Bold as is the idea of flooding even this beautiful flesh with such warm tones, daintily and airily as the feathery fronds of the palm leaves flicker over the grand, noble lines of the nude

body, this picture nevertheless produces a chaste impression.

The purity of the artist's soul seems to imprint its stamp on all his creations. Like the ancients he does not shrink from nature, it only fascinates him and tempts him to represent it for the sake of its beauty, and to him the idea of beauty is associated with purity. Besides, he has made the "moderation" of antiquity his own and remains faithful to it, even when depicting passionate movement, as in his "Pyrrhic Dance."

What a task it was to represent with brush and colors this "mimic game of war," as Plato calls it, and how he has accomplished it! The vase-pictures have showed him the ranks of men in full armor with floating plumes on the crests of their helmets; Plato taught him how in this (afterwards also Roman) game, the mock combatants advanced toward each other and, with flexible movements and beautiful pantomine, simulated retreat and assault as it was practised in bloody battles against the foe. How exciting this dance must have been to the spectators; how much grace, power, and beauty it must have been possible to

display, since it is well attested that Caligula, and even Nero, bestowed citizenship upon the ephebe who had danced the Pyrrhic (πυρρίχη) particularly well.

One would fain join the old men and youths under the colonnade to witness this dance as Tadema represents it. What delicate tact it requires not to overstep the limits of moderation and to make the spectacle of men dancing with men, which is repugnant to our custom, not only endurable but beautiful, dignified, and at the same time animated and vigorous. One step more, and this dance of men would seem to us rude; one less, and it might tempt the spectator to laugh. An Egyptian King of the race of the Ptolemies, before whom it had probably been badly performed, had it danced by apes, and the caricature was successful until a wag flung some nuts among the four-footed dancers. A ludicrous idea for Paul Meyerheim! Does not this anecdote show that the Pyrrhic, when not admirably and decorously performed, might seem comical even to the Greeks? But I think they, too, would have enjoyed Tadema's.

In the spring of 1878 the master again went to

Italy, and the picture he finished before his departure seems to have been created under the influence of his delight in the sunshine and radiant colors he expected to find there. He called it "A loving Welcome," and it glows with light, bright-hued flowers, and heartfelt joy.

The spectator sees the tiny enclosed garden of a Pompeian house, and nowhere has summer painted poppies in brighter hues than in the bed before us, more brilliant sunflowers have never opened than those on yonder wall. The sun-dial points to the hour after noon, and the sun is shining brightly and warmly on the temples and larger buildings that tower above the cheerful house. Great joy reigns there, for the little daughter has returned and is clinging around the neck of her mother, who has hurried forward in advance of the father to greet her. But his turn will come. He is an author, philosopher, or poet — the papyrus roll in his hand shows it — and when tidings came that the expected darling had arrived, he left his writing almost as quickly as the mother her household duties. How tender, how joyous is this greeting! Every mem-

ber of the household must share it. A maid-servant is coming, bringing the youngest child to meet the returning daughter. Even the dog wants to greet her, and on the right, in the shade where the altar stands, the water is pouring from the fountain as though it, too, wished to ripple its "welcome." I fully agree with Vosmaer, Rembrandt's biographer, when he says of this picture: "The harmonious combination of light and shade, the subtle choice of colors, the vigor and glow of the tints, the extreme delicacy of the execution of details, with the broad and flowing style, make this painting to me one of the master's most perfect works."

This it certainly is; but two years later he created a similar one which I prefer; for paintings are like children; to the possessor, one of their most beautiful qualities is that they are *his*, and the writer of these lines has the happiness of owning a picture which Tadema called "The Parting Kiss." He knows it like his own child, his favorite work, yet daily finds new beauties. It, too, transports us to a Pompeian house. A slave is holding the door open, and through it we

see the street, where the chariot is waiting, and beyond the azure sea filling the gentle curve of the bay. In the beautiful anteroom, in whose marble floor is set a basin surrounded by rich mosaic ornaments, stands the lovely young mother bending to her little half-grown daughter, who lovingly stretches her arms to her and joyously receives the farewell kiss. The father's bust looks down from a high pedestal upon this pleasant scene, so full of deep and warm affection. It is no sorrowful parting, there is no long separation in view; the chariot will probably only convey the mother to her parents in Herculaneum or to the baths at Baiae. But what lends this gem of a painting a special value, is the circumstance that the beautiful young mother with the violets in her hair is the artist's wife, the little daughter is pretty Miss Anne Tadema, and the bust on the pedestal represents the master. All three are excellent likenesses, recognizable at the first glance. Valuable as this painting is to the writer as a work of art, it is the portraits that make it dear to him.

In Rome (1878) Tadema commenced the "Four

Seasons," which have become very well known through Blanchard's engravings.

"Spring" is thus represented: Through a meadow so verdant and flowery that it rejoices the beholder's heart, a girl is walking, a lovely, modest, fresh little maiden, herself a spring-blossom just unfolded, gazing confusedly, unconscious of the magic of her own charms, at the flower in her left hand. The first spring-tide ray of love is just shining into her heart, and now the flower must serve her as an oracle; or is she only wondering whether she can venture to give *him* the blossom she has gathered?

"Summer!" A hot day! In the bath-room of an aristocratic house — lined throughout with exquisitely carved marble — a lovely, languid girl slowly fanning herself with an ostrich-feather fan, reclines in the oval basin sunk in the floor. The cool water ripples around her beautiful limbs, and on its surface float the gay petals of countless fragrant summer flowers. On the bench above the tub the bather's beautiful sister is sleeping in indolent ease.

"Autumn:" Flames are ascending from the altar of

sacrifice, flaring up to the lofty *herma* with the bearded Silenus, around whose head vine-leaves twine and from whose temples hang bunches of grapes. A tall amphora, containing the fresh juice of this autumn's vintage, leans against the wall, a wine-jar stands in the midst of the fire. Dionysius is to be thanked for the best gift of autumn, and before the altar a young Bacchante floats with swift step in a whirling dance. In her right hand she holds a burning torch, in her left an exquisitely-formed goblet. A garland adorns her thick dark locks, and the panther-skin hangs in shining hues across her arm and breast down on her simple robe.

"Winter:" A family is seeking shelter from the wintry cold at the foot of a huge column. The little portable stove diffuses warmth and the steam of boiling food. The plain meal has begun. The young mother, who is sitting between the head of the family and a pretty girl — perhaps her sister — lifts her little one gaily to her blooming face, as if she wanted it to share her enjoyment of the warm nook and waiting repast. A pleasant scene of simple yet cosy winter comfort.

The painting "Fredegunde and Galsvintha" is a representation from the cycle of the tragedy of an estimable woman. Besides this picture of life-size, he also finished in 1878 his smallest painting: "A Question." This tiny work of art can be covered by a man's two hands, yet in the great art exhibition at Munich, in 1879, no other exerted even an approximate power of attraction. Whenever I approached, it was surrounded by a dense throng, and what rarely occurs happened in this case — both critics and public were equally pleased.

A summer day, bright, clear, and warm as only the happy South can bestow. The sea, a glittering expanse of the purest blue, mirrors the cloudless sky above it. On a white marble bench upon its shore reclines a youth who is asking the fair-haired girl sitting beside him with her lap full of roses, a question. Who ever left this picture without feeling that he had been permitted to cast a glance into a brighter, happier world than ours? Who did not have the happy pair on the marble bench impressed upon his memory? This painting gave me no rest until I had found the

answer to the question it puts to the spectator, and written my idyl "A Question."

In the Art-Palace on green Isar's strand,
Before one picture long I kept my seat,
It held me spellbound by some magic band,
Nor, when my home I sought, could I forget.

A year elapsed, came winter's frost and snow,
'Twas rarely now we saw the bright sun shine,
I plucked up courage and cried: "Be it so!"
Then southward wandered with those I call mine.

Like birds of passage built we there a nest
On a palm-shaded shore, all steeped in light,
Life was a holiday, enjoyed with zest
And grateful hearts, the while it winged its flight.

Oft on the sea's wide, purplish-blue expanse,
With ever new delight I fixed my eyes,
Tadema's picture, now at every glance
Recalled to mind, a thousand times would rise.

Once a day dawned, glad as a bride's fair face,
Perfume, and light, and joy it did enfold,
Then — without search, flitted from out of space
Words for the tale that my friend's picture told.

This is exactly how I chanced to create my unpretending work "A Question."*

In 1879 appeared the pictures: "Down the Stream," "The Garden-Altar," "Not at Home," "To the temple of Ceres," and, in 1880, "Ave Cæsar Imperator."

In 1881 Tadema completed his "Sappho," a painting that excited the greatest admiration at the Berlin Art Exhibition, not only on account of its exquisite reproduction of marble, but for the marvellous grouping of the figures and the thoroughly antique repose in which the whole is steeped. If my opinion is correct, Tadema has this time taken his subject from an elegy of the Hermesian in which are the lines:

"Surely thou know'st how, in the Lesbian land,
Alcæus oft the festal dances led,
Kindled by Sappho's charms, fierce glowed love's brand,
As, lauding her in song, the lute he played."

He, Alcæus, not Sappho, is the principal figure in

* Authorized English translation published by William S. Gottsberger, N. Y.

the picture. "Lauding her in song," he sounds the stringed instrument, but bending over the table and the wreath lying on it, she listens with the utmost pleasure. Beside her stands the little daughter she mentions in one of her songs, and in the exedra sit the friends and pupils of the "ninth muse," "the female Homer," delighted to hear her extolled by this master. Tadema's conception of the person of the great poetess is noble and striking. This is not the love-sick woman whom legend — probably associated with the comedy written later — asserts killed herself because of unrequited love, but the poetess of whom Pinytus' epitaph says:

> "Earth covers naught save Sappho's dust and name,
> But her wise song enjoys immortal fame."

Tadema shows us this wise songstress, yet we understand that she was capable of the ardent passion which pervades some of the few poems that have been preserved to our day. There is a superb contrast between the white marble, the figures in the full glow of light, and the dark blue sea in the background.

Unfortunately I have not seen "Cleopatra," "Reading Horace Aloud," nor "Hadrian visiting a pottery in Britain." The composition of the latter work is said to be one of Tadema's greatest masterpieces; undoubtedly the details are exquisite, for he is an admirer and thorough connoisseur of antique vessels, and has frequently represented with both pencil and colors the potter's art and its products. Does he wish thereby to show his gratitude to the daughter of Dibutades, the potter, who according to tradition invented his own art, painting?

Tadema has also proved himself a portrait painter; the likeness of his daughter Anne — which the reader may enjoy — was an ornament of the last Berlin exhibition.

Having already exceeded my allotted space, I am prohibited from mentioning separately the portraits and water-colors I know he has executed. The latter would be well worthy of a minute description, for with the exception of Menzel, whom Tadema deeply and cordially admires, no living artist has surpassed him in this mode of painting. His wife, who creates such

MISS ANNE TADEMA.

charming oil-paintings, is also a dainty water-colorist. The scenes he painted for the tableaux given — partly by his assistance and influence — in aid of the inundated Rhenish provinces were masterpieces. Other small pictures, sketched in leisure hours, have been transformed into stage decorations by managers who appreciated their charms.

The tree shall be known by its fruits; to give an accurate portrait of the artist I have entered into a minute description of his works. Whoever knows these, knows the man himself. In my opinion the time for a complete picture of Tadema's personality has not yet arrived; he is still, thank God, among the ranks of the living, and when in the future his last hour strikes, many hands more skilled than mine will hasten to write his eulogy. As for me, I can only say that I consider it a special favor of fortune to be permitted to call this rare, highly-educated, warm-hearted man, and genuine artist, my friend. With so much genius, such a wealth of knowledge, and such unusually wide renown, he has retained a charming simplicity of character. Whoever knows him, knows the source of the light and sunny

cheerfulness that irradiate many of his paintings; they proceed from his pure, chaste soul, which is overflowing with them. I shall never forget his face and the sparkling of his artist-eyes as one May day while we were driving with our wives, amid sunlight, fresh spring foliage, and singing birds, through the unpretending Leipsic Rosenthal, he exclaimed: "Ebers, the world is still beautiful!"

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A GALLERY OF EBERS' HEROINES.

(EXTRACT FROM ARTICLE IN THE BOOK BUYER, CHRISTMAS, 1885.)

"Only Gustav Freytag has before been illustrated on so magnificent a scale, and Victor Scheffel's 'Ekkehard' has also set some very skilful brushes in motion. But anything quite so elaborate, and, at the same time, so artistically satisfactory, has, we believe, never before been attempted. The Egyptian romances of Ebers, quite apart from their literary merit, are replete with scenes of striking picturesqueness; and no more tempting subjects for pictorial skill could be imagined than his archæological love-making, murders, and abductions, traced in bold relief against a background of sphinxes and pyramids. There is a glow and splendor of color in them all which is ravishing. With the aid of these pictures, which are as beautiful as they are faithful in archæological detail, the civilization of ancient Egypt becomes as vivid and intelligent to us as that of the Parisian boulevards.

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